

2020 Public Use Microdata Areas Program (PUMA) Coding Guidelines

September 2021

Background

State Data Centers (SDCs) provide PUMA names and codes with their 2020 PUMA submission. The Geographic Update Partnership Software (GUPS) stores this information and bundles these attributes during the export process. As the Census Bureau conducts their review of 2020 PUMA submissions, staff will work closely with SDCs to ensure the codes observe the guidelines in this material. Because these geographies and their attributes appear in public products (e.g., demographic, housing, and geographic products), the Census Bureau has final approval on all names and codes.

The *2010 PUMA Names File* that includes both the PUMA name and code for the nation is available on the [PUMA website](#). Participants in 2020 PUMA may find this reference file useful to copy/paste the names and codes into GUPS rather than re-typing the information.

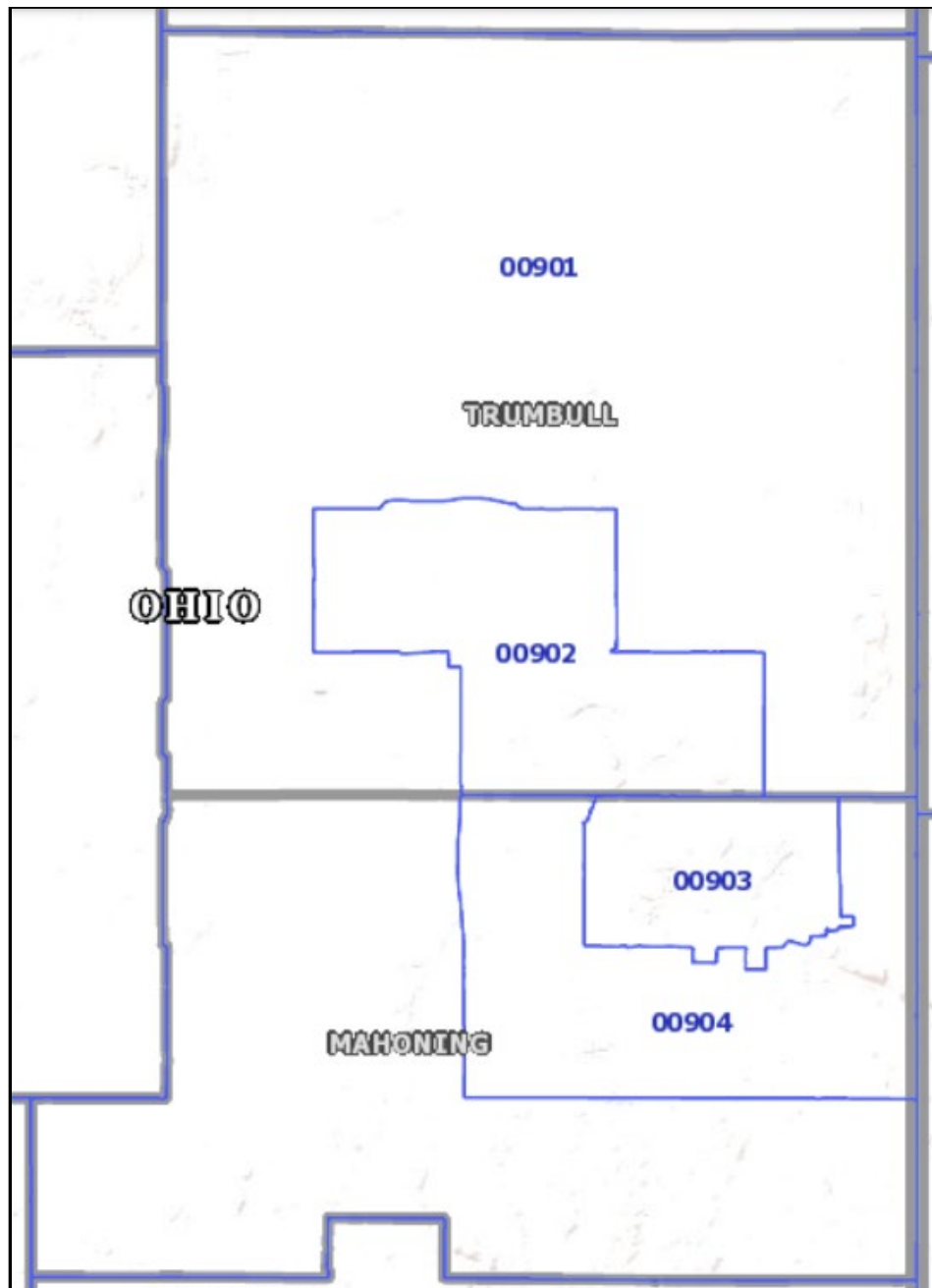
Guidelines

- 1) PUMA codes must be unique, five-digit numeric codes that range from 00100 – 99995.
- 2) Preserve the 2010 PUMA code for 2020 if the geographic extent of the proposed PUMA remains unchanged from 2010, except when it is necessary to establish an orderly, logical coding scheme within the state, as described in the next guideline.
- 3) PUMA codes should be assigned sequentially within a state, beginning with 00100, 00200, 00300, and so forth in an orderly, logical manner. They should not be randomly assigned.
 - To establish this orderly, logical manner, assign codes using a geographic sequence that begins in the northwest corner of the state. Proceed with coding from west to east, then east to west in a serpentine fashion until each PUMA is coded. This sequence of coding promotes easy identification by visual inspection and review since codes that are close in numeric sequence should be close geographically.

- 4) Assign “00” as the fourth and fifth digits of the PUMA code for each PUMA that consists of either an entire county or group of whole counties. This coding signifies the PUMA is comprised of one or more whole counties. It allows for easy identification of whole county PUMAs, whether they are in a single county or include a group of counties. See the image below for an example of a PUMA comprising two whole counties.



- 5) Assign the same first three digits of the PUMA code and increment up from “01” for the fourth and fifth digits, for each PUMA that splits a county or group of counties. PUMAs that are delineated using census tracts instead of whole counties, should be coded in this manner. This coding signifies the PUMA is comprised of one or more split counties. It allows for easy identification of county-part PUMAs, whether they are in a single county or span a group of counties. See the image below for an example of PUMAs comprising parts of two counties.



Contact Information

For questions or clarification about these guidelines, contact the Census Bureau staff involved with the 2020 PUMA at geo.puma@census.gov for assistance.